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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

FEB 14 '79

Issue #16
July 25, 1975

MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

HIGHLIGHTS OF JULY 17 COUNCIL MEETING.....

OI presented a security equipment proposal to the Council. After discussion, it was agreed that (1) security equipment presently located in Minneapolis will be moved to Washington; (2) OI will develop a comprehensive security study and determine how the equipment fits into the overall security needs of the USDA D.C. Complex; and (3) OI will present its recommendations to the Council on August 26. (Contact: Tony Musolino, OI, ext. 74104.)

A discussion was held concerning the format for the narrative progress reports on the EEO program. No decision was reached at this time. (Contact: Bob Birdsong, OP, ext. 72973.)

At the July 11 meeting, the Council went on record in support of the Cooperative Education Program. Within 5 months, OP is to report to the Council on the progress of the program. (Contact: Bob Birdsong, OP, ext. 72973.)

The special meeting on FY 1976 agency assessments has been rescheduled to July 31, Room 3840-S, at 2:30 p.m.

REMINDER..... Agency suggestions about major staff issues are OVERDUE. Submit them to Mr. Bolduc (see Issue #15).

TASK FORCES EXAMINE VARIED SUBJECTS.....

- ... One will review Office of the Secretary Report Requirements. Agencies participating are FS, SCS, FNS, OA, APHIS, and ES. (Contact: J.P. Bolduc, SEC, ext. 77247.)
- ... The Task Force on Photocomposition is studying Department-wide methods and procedures used to procure camera ready copy for publication of materials. It has representatives from ADS, ARS, COMM, ERS, OMF, and OO. The purpose of the task force is to identify problems which exist in the Department regarding this area, and to recommend solutions to those problems. (Contact: John Miranda, OMF, ext. 75301.)
- ... A task force has recently been established to determine field requirements, stressing the areas of data processing/data communications within the agricultural service center environment and to develop an implementing plan for meeting those requirements. ADS, FmHA, SCS, ASCS, OA, FCIC, OO and ES are on the task force. (Contact: R. Williams, ADS, ext. 72118.)

USDA APPROPRIATIONS BILL PROGRESSES.....H.R. 8561 was passed by the House July 14 and reported by the Senate Appropriations Committee on July 22. The Senate added \$30.8 million to the House bill in new budget authority, but cut loan levels by \$45 million. In summary, the Senate Committee:

- cut child nutrition by \$80 million,
- added \$130 million for farm ownership loans,
- added \$5.2 million for FmHA grants and \$5 million for FmHA salaries and expenses,
- added \$25 million to SCS for emergency flood rehabilitation and \$5 million for soil surveys,
- added \$31 million to ARS,
- added \$5 million for forestry work and for ES,
- restored the House cut of \$2.5 million for list sampling frame for SR\$.
- eliminated limitation on Working Capital Fund,
- provided separate appropriations for ACP and Forestry incentives of \$175 million and \$15 million respectively,
- retained separate appropriations for the OSEC and Departmental Administration and retained appropriation account for the Office of the Inspector General,
- added \$5 million to AMS for additional supervisory grain inspectors, and
- cut the amount added back by the House, \$1.6 million for marketing grants to states.

The Senate hopes to take the bill to the floor yet this week and would like to go to Conference very early next week. If this schedule is met Congress may send the bill to the President before it recesses August 1. (Contact: Bob Barham, OMF, ext. 75901.)

GRAIN INVESTIGATIONS BRING NEW INDICTMENTS.....The OI/FBI/U.S. attorney grain investigations resulted in 14 more indictments in New Orleans on July 21. The latest group brought the total to 34 individuals and firms that have been indicted for various violations of the U.S. Grain Standards Act and the U.S. Warehouse Act. (Contact: Rod Elam, OI, ext. 76979.)

ADMINISTRATIVE CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AUGUST 28-29.....Key level managers from the Office of the Secretary will participate in the meeting at the Sheraton National Motor Hotel in Arlington.

DEVELOPMENT OF PURCHASE ORDER SYSTEM ILLUSTRATES INTERACTION BETWEEN AGENCIES AND NFC.....

NFC provided a systems concept package to the agencies earlier this year. Meetings were then held to review and evaluate the systems concept. Agency representatives' comments and recommendations resulted in a number of significant systems modifications and improvements. An overview of the modified system was presented to appropriate OO and agency personnel on July 1 and 2. A preliminary draft of the external procedures will be forwarded to all agencies by August 1 for review and comment. NFC and OO will work together to develop training packages necessary to implement the system. Current plans call for phased implementation: SARU agencies on January 1, 1976; ARS on March 1, 1976; and all other agencies before June 30, 1976. (Contact: Dennis Boyd, NFC.)

AGENCIES' DRAFT SYSTEM NOTICES UNDER PRIVACY ACT OVERDUE IN OGC.....

These notices, for systems of records maintained under the Privacy Act, should be submitted to the Director, Research and Operations Division, OGC (room 2321-S). The drafts will be reviewed and returned to the agencies for preparation in final according to instructions contained in the Federal Register special supplement of June 19, 1975. This preparation will require a special front for an IBM selectric typewriter (type code 170; part no. 1167170). AGENCIES MUST RETURN these system notices in final to the Director, Research and Operations Divisions, by Wednesday, August 13, 1975, so USDA can meet its publication deadline for insuring compliance with the Act's publication requirements. (Contact: Doug Wood, OGC, ext. 77350.)

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

FISCAL YEAR 1976 8(a) PROGRAM TARGETS DUE IN OEO BY JULY 25..... Submit your Minority Business targets and potential contracts to the Rural Minority Business Assistance Division. RMBAD has information available identifying approved minority and/or 8(a) contractors, and will work with agencies and the Small Business Administration (SBA) in setting up negotiations. (Contact: J. Fred King. OEO, ext. 77117.)

OEO INDIAN DESK BROCHURE TO BE AVAILABLE..... It will delineate program services and benefits available to American Indians and is scheduled for distribution to tribal entities on or about July 31. The brochure will contain a description of agency programs, eligibility requirements, contact persons, telephone numbers, etc. (Contact: Miles S. Washington, Jr., OEO, ext. 74257.)

PERSONNEL

JAMES D. KEAST BECOMES GENERAL COUNSEL..... He was sworn in on July 17 and has assumed his duties.

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

PRESIDENT CONCERNED WITH TIMELY RESPONSE TO MAIL.....At his Cabinet meeting of July 16, 1975, the President expressed concern that White House referrals and Congressional mail are not getting the timely response desired. His comments prompted Secretary Butz to reemphasize, at this week's staff meeting, the importance of timely responses to all incoming mail. During the past two months, the Department's record has improved. However, some of the improvement was possible due to a reduction in incoming mail. Highlights for May and June statistical reports are as follows:

	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>
<u>ALL MAIL</u>		
Percent Answered on Time.....	62%	65%
Unanswered and Overdue at End of Month.....	509	434
Overdue and Unacknowledged at End of Month.....	330	288
<u>WHITE HOUSE</u>		
Percent Answered on Time.....	69%	70%
Unanswered and Overdue at End of Month.....	56	23
Overdue and Unacknowledged at End of Month.....	47	20
<u>CONGRESSIONAL</u>		
Percent Answered on Time.....	57%	62%
Unanswered and Overdue at End of Month.....	192	121
Overdue and Unacknowledged at End of Month.....	99	51

As indicated above, the amount of correspondence that is overdue and unacknowledged continues to be a problem. (Contact: Joyce Hooks, 00, ext. 77373.)

CENTRAL SERVICES

SRS NEGOTIATES CONTRACT TO USE VIDEO ASSISTED INSTRUCTION COURSES.....
The contract, with Advanced Systems, Inc., provides for the use of their library which includes ADP, management development, and a variety of other courses. The courses are designed for self study or classroom use. All USDA agencies may use the library through SRS at the price effective for our combined volume. There is no minimum or maximum volume for a given agency. A video tape player and monitor are necessary. Monthly rental per course cost from \$39 to over \$600 at the rate of \$39 per video tape per month. SRS requests each agency which wishes to use this contract to designate one contact. You would also need to complete a reimbursement agreement with SRS. Use OMS Form 106. (Contact: B. Althouse, SRS, ext. 73047.)